

**State Board of Education
Transformation Discussion with Vermont Local School Board Members
December 18, 2007**

Local school board members responded to three questions. The discussion was facilitated by Department staff.

1. As you envision a transformed education system, what current practices should be included that best serve the needs of students?

- Maximum local input
- Mentoring programs – in-school and after school
- Multiple pathways for kids – tech center etc
- Differentiated instruction – board driven initiative K-12
- Teacher advisory such as U-32 model
- Professional Learning Communities
- Response To Instruction (RTI) - teachers focus on student learning and weekly progress monitoring (Wolcott example)
- Action Planning process – some places identify a board role in the action plan – board has input on Action Plan issues
- Technical Center (Green Mountain-example) provides viable alternate paths for many students
- Moving some board/school administrative duties to the SU level for efficiency
- Teacher leaders to enhance best practice in school
- Protect local school boards from losing voice – it's not about control, it's about voice
- Caution should be taken with the word "Transformation" It implies that what's happening now is not good – highlight good practices that are happening and share them so that they are available to a larger number of educators
- Capitalize on our strengths around creativity and problem solving that other countries such as China don't have or encourage in their educational system
- Standards provide security and accountability for students as well as educators

2. What new practices should be included?

- Gap between the expectations of students and the expectations of teachers (Higher Ed) How do we address that. – Technology expectations K-12 focus needs to be addressed
- Education is going global and we need to address that
- Appropriate way to use the tools of technology (culturally, socially, ethically, as well as to enhance learning)
- Focus on thinking and problem solving
- Bring higher ed into the discussion to change gate keeping practices such as the SAT exam
- Needs models of schools that are demonstrating effective practices and give them incentives – don't focus only on schools that are not making adequate progress
- Individual Learning Plan is just a tool but we need effective ways to measure student learning. Do we want "Learning Plans" or "Learning".
- Transformation document is exciting- an attempt to respond to a different world that our students are learning in. It is a transformational time. People will respond to the

new environment in accessing information whether we do anything or not. Vermont and VT schools need to work through the transformation process in order to adequately support student learning in the future

- Create choices student that will enhance student learning and respond to their needs in the changing environment we find ourselves – if we don't provide the choices, others will and they might not be a s positive
- Identify models of success and share the practices
- Focus on early education
- Invest in a positive (PR) approach to the Transformation
- Explore promising practices from other states and countries
- Starts at home with values for education
- Foster professional learning communities and make them more widespread and supported
- Need ongoing student voice to ensure rigor with relevance

3. What questions, issues, suggestions does the document, *How are the Children?...* raise for you that you would want the State Board to be mindful of in its public policy role and as it moves forward toward next steps in this process?

- What are the outcomes we want for kids? – are the standards etc., still relevant?
- Teachers who are at the flash point of teaching and learning need to determine priorities (within the set of standards and Grade Expectations) but it's not being done consistently. What are the core learning goals that we can be consistent about and will enhance success for students?
- How can we determine the skills that kids will need in 10 years?
- Student centered education – what is it and how can we implement and then give students all the same assessments with the same expectations?
- Broad focus of the document is very good but the challenge will be how to implement it system wide and to protect the process from political agendas
- Thrust of the document id excellent - care needs be taken that people aren't drawn to particular aspects such as individual learning plans that might be misinterpreted
- How do we gauge our success against national and global indicators based on research and consensus about the future?
- What are our priorities? Is creativity a core priority? What are the others? – Re-visit the vision and content of the VT Framework in light of our current environment and see if it still reflects our priorities – does it need revision?